

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features five pages of the latest news.

Tyrrell exits Globus

AFTER more than six years at the helm of Globus family of brands in the Asia Pacific, MD Gai Tyrrell has resigned from the role (TD breaking news 02 Jan).

In making the decision, Tyrrell (pictured) said it was a difficult call and one not taken lightly.

"With major projects completed and an excellent commercial management team in place, the foundation is set for the next phase of the company's growth in our region," she said.

During Tyrrell's tenure, she oversaw the expansion into new markets, which included the appointment of a Globus distributor in Asia to represent products across Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, South Korea, and the Philippines.

No replacement or interim MD for APAC has been named.



GBTA to double members

THE Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) has a local chief for the first time in more than 10 years, with experienced travel executive Derek Sadubin (pictured) appointed as Country Manager, Australia and NZ.

Reporting into Regional SVP for EMEA Catherine Logan, Sadubin will be charged with growing GBTA's presence across the region and operating more events.

Sadubin was the prime mover behind the inaugural Australia Corporate Travel Summit last year, a springboard which saw local GBTA membership double.

Speaking with *Travel Daily* about the new role, Sadubin said he will work alongside Regional Director APAC Elle Ng-Darmawan to double Australian membership again in 2025.

"Having more local members of GBTA has a two-fold benefit - they gain access to all of GBTA's excellent travel procurement resources - and they get to contribute to a growing pool of locally sourced data on trends and issues, further strengthening those resources," he said.

The means of achieving this ambitious objective will involve the creation of an all-new GBTA Australian advisory board, with more details to be revealed soon.

Sadubin also confirmed GBTA will again be a strategic partner of the ACTS event when it returns in an expanded format as FACTS - the Festival of Aviation &



Corporate Travel Summits, taking place in Nov at the ICC Sydney. AB

A&K finds Sanctuary

ABERCROMBIE & Kent (A&K) has flagged increased investment and expansion of its portfolio of safari camps and lodges under a newly unveiled branding.

The luxury tour operator's Sanctuary Retreats arm has been rebranded as A&K Sanctuary to better reflect its value proposition to a new generation of travellers seeking unique innovations and sustainable designs.

Growth plans will include upgrading existing properties, adding new sites, and launching a new riverboat experience.

In Africa, two lodges are being rebuilt from the ground up, with Baines' Lodge in Botswana's Okavango Delta and Gorilla Forest Lodge in Uganda both receiving a major revamp before reopening in mid-2025.

A&K Sanctuary will also add the Kitirua Plains Lodge in Kenya's Amboseli National Park, offering views of Mount Kilimanjaro.

The property will open in early 2026, marking A&K's third property in Kenya.

Meanwhile in Jun, A&K Sanctuary will launch Pure Amazon, a boutique riverboat on the headwaters of the Amazon in Peru, the first foray for the division in South America.

The developments follow a soft rebranding of the broader business late last year (TD 23 Oct 2024), seeing a new logo and tag line introduced.

DNSW names interim

EXCLUSIVE

DESTINATION NSW has confirmed Karen Jones will step into the role of Acting CEO of Destination NSW from 13 Jan, replacing Steve Cox who departed in late Nov (TD 18 Dec 2024).

A spokesperson for the state's peak tourism body told *Travel Daily* that more information regarding the permanent recruitment process will be shared early this year.

Jones was previously the Chief Executive of the NSW Government Office of Sport, a position she had held for just over five years.

Before that she was the Director of Transport Assessments within the NSW Department of Planning and Environment for two years.

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Airlines to pay for three-hour delays

AIRLINES will be forced to offer passengers a full refund if flights are delayed by more than three hours, a new Federal Government consultation paper has proposed.

The draft *Aviation Customer Rights Charter*, one of the major reform suggestions flagged in the landmark *Aviation White Paper* last year (**TD** 26 Aug 2024), has put forward several protections for travellers impacted by flight delays and cancellations.

In instances where flight disruptions are within the control of airlines, the charter will guarantee passengers the option to cancel time-dependent flights in exchange for a full refund.

The reimbursement will be paid to customers in the original form of payment, including cash, credit cards or flyer reward points, with travel vouchers to be issued if the passenger chooses that option.

The draft charter also proposes that carriers will be responsible



for providing assistance to rebook flights with original or alternative airlines at no extra cost.

In further financial protections, airlines will need to foot the bill for associated costs such as accommodation and transfers where customers are required to remain away from home overnight, while meal vouchers and reimbursement to access a lounge where food is available will also be the liability of airlines.

Affected travellers will need to receive a refund for a scrapped flight within 14 days of the cancellation being notified regardless of the fare type and where an alternative flight has not been agreed to.

The refund will need to be the full amount paid by the customer, including baggage charges, pre-purchased meals, extra leg room charges, as well as any extra payment fees and charges.

In instances where flights have been boarded, but are disrupted through a delayed take-off for longer than one hour, customers will be guaranteed access to airline amenities, appropriate refreshments, and regular information updates.

Federal Minister for Transport, Catherine King, said the charter would ensure flyers are treated with dignity and respect.

"This includes receiving timely and fair remedies when their flight is cancelled or delayed," Minister King said.

The charter also proposed all complaints need to be responded to within a target 24-hour time window, with 30 days laid down as the resolution objective. **AB**

Win a Vietnam trip

TRAVEL Agent Finder (TAF) has announced a new travel agent incentive in partnership with G Adventures, which will see one advisor win a holiday to Vietnam.

Agents who update their profile page on the TAF platform and complete an entry form by 31 Jan will go into the draw to win a 10-day trip for two in Vietnam courtesy of G Adventures.

To assist advisors with refreshing their profiles, a training video is now available inside the members area of the site, as well as the option to attend live optimisation training webinars with Q&A sessions during the month of Jan.

Any agents who attends the live session will receive a bonus entry to win the Vietnam trip.

"Now is the perfect time to give it some love to your latest business info and specialist expertise," TAF founder Anna Shannon said - find out more incentive details **HERE**.

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QF hangs on to 10th

QANTAS has scraped into 10th spot in an annual review of the APAC's most reliable airlines.

Cirium's *On-time Performance Review 2024* report showed the Aussie carrier delivered 73.93% of on-time arrivals from its 277,525 flights for the year.

The APAC's most punctual carrier was Japan Airlines with over 80% of flights running to schedule, ahead of fellow Japanese brand All Nippon Airways in second position.

Singapore Airlines snagged third spot, while Air New Zealand was fourth and Thai AirAsia was fifth.

However, Aussie airlines were nowhere to be seen in the global list of top performers, failing to make a dent in the top 10.

According to the data, Qantas subsidiary Jetstar and Virgin Australia respectively recorded



on-time arrival rates of 73.39% and 72.70%.

Aeromexico was crowned the most reliable carrier globally, with an impressive 86.7% of flights arriving on time.

Saudia was the next best with 86.35%, followed by Delta Air Lines (83.46%), LATAM (82.89%), Qatar Airways (82.83%), Azul (82.42%), and Avianca (81.8%).

Aussie airports also missed out on any notable global recognition, failing to make an impression on the top 20 most punctual departures list.

Travellers taking off from Riyadh King Khalid International Airport in Saudi Arabia were most likely to be on schedule, with the hub recording 86.65% of on-time departures last year. *AB*

Rex completes sale

REX will be able to pay down more of its debts after successfully completing the sale of its Pel-Air ambulance business to an entity controlled by Toll.

The \$47 million transaction was announced by the troubled carrier in Oct last year (*TD* 25 Oct 2024), with Pel-Air being a historically strong performing division for Rex, having secured a 12-year contract with Ambulance Victoria worth over \$300 million in 2022, as well as strong revenue injections from contracts with NSW Ambulance in recent years.

Rail Europe new track

RAIL Europe is no longer being represented by marketing and communications agency Three Wise Bees in Australia, with the contract concluding at the end of last year.

Marketing enquires are now handled internally by Richard Leonard and Sandy Battle.

Hawaii shines at the Cirque



CIRQUE du Soleil has debuted 'Auana, its first-ever residency in Hawaii (*TD* 05 Jun), which recently premiered at Outrigger Waikiki Beachcomber Hotel.

The new performance (**pictured**) is a homage to Hawaii's heritage and Cirque du Soleil's artistry, combining acrobatics, multimedia projections, and mo'olelo (stories) inspired by the destination's rich culture.

Performances run Wed through Sun at 5.30pm and 8.30pm exclusively at the Outrigger Theatre, with the premiere attended by local big name celebrities including Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson, Roy Yamaguchi, and Carissa Moore.

"I thought the show was brilliant, the performers were amazing, but what I really loved is that our Polynesian culture is at the forefront," Johnson said. *MS*

Passport price hike

AUSTRALIA has secured its place as the most expensive passport in the world, with the fee for a 10-year document rising by 3.5% to \$412.

The updated pricing has also seen a five-year children's passport cost \$208, while a replacement passport will set Aussie travellers back \$259.

Cost increases have been enacted to line up with inflation, and arrives on the back of a hefty 15% price increase in Jul 2024.

"Many Australians scrimp and save to afford a special holiday to Bali or Fiji, only to find the cost of a passport is similar to the cost of an airfare," the Coalition's Foreign Affairs spokesperson Simon Birmingham criticised.

He also characterised the latest hike as a "backdoor tax grab".

Discover the all new *River Cruise Special Report*





JB serves up an ace

JOURNEY Beyond will build on the success of its Paris Olympics brand campaign, signing on as the major broadcast partner for Nine's 'Summer of Tennis'.

The campaign is showcasing Journey Beyond's 16 brands and 200 experiences, highlighting its range of travel experiences.

Tennis fans are able to access a range of offers on the Indian Pacific, The Ghan, and Great Southern train experiences, along with the Outback Spirit itineraries, including pre-release and advance purchase packages.

To celebrate the partnership, Journey Beyond has announced a range of deals, including fly free offers on new bookings between Adelaide and Darwin in gold twin and single and gold premium for travel until 31 Mar.

Travellers on The Ghan can also stay free in Adelaide or Darwin.

Victoria tax goes live

A LEVY on short-term accommodation has come into force in Victoria this week, with guests now needing to fork out 7.5% extra for stays in properties listed on sites such as Airbnb.

The impost was passed by the Victorian Govt last year (*TD* 20 Sep 2024) in a bid to alleviate pressure on affordable housing.

A tax on short stays caused consternation with brands such as Stayz and Airbnb, who both argued that hotels in the state should also be slugged with the same rate of added guests taxes.

Brent is king of the hill



TOURISM Fiji CEO Brent Hill has been honoured as Fiji's top leader for 2024 by the *Fiji Sun*.

"To be recognised alongside champions of our industry who I admire greatly like Fantasha Lockington is an honour and humbling," Hill said, adding "what a great year overall for tourism in 2024 - despite the odd bump in the road".

Hill commenced with the Pacific nation's peak tourism organisation in 2021 after a close-to six-year tenure with the South Australian Tourism Commission.

During his time at the helm, Fiji has enjoyed strong demand from the Australian outbound market, particularly during the early stages of border reopenings, which saw Fiji be one of the first markets to open up to Aussies. *AB*

Intrepid's record year

INTREPID has exceeded \$630 million in revenue for 2024 and eclipsed its slated goal of \$37 million in EBITDA for the year.

In a LinkedIn post from CEO James Thornton, he revealed the results represented the strongest financial performance in the operator's 35-year history.

The bottom line was helped along by a record-breaking month of \$80 million in bookings in Nov.

Thornton added he is expecting a recertified B Corp score early in the new year that should be a "significant improvement" on the 2021 sustainable result.

"Profit is the output of what we do, not the purpose, but it enables us to create greater impact," Thornton said.



Window Seat

TALK about racquet abuse.

British tennis player Olivia Nicholls was far from amused when she picked up her checked bag following a Jetstar flight, only to find most of her prized racquets were mangled beyond repair.

The high-profile sportsperson slammed the carrier for firstly not allowing her to carry on her sportsbag, and also for its badly damaged contents.

Taking to X to give Jetstar a major serve, Nicholls stated the incident was "unacceptable" after paying \$160 to check the bag in.

"How is this possible? My bags are totally destroyed," the star fumed.

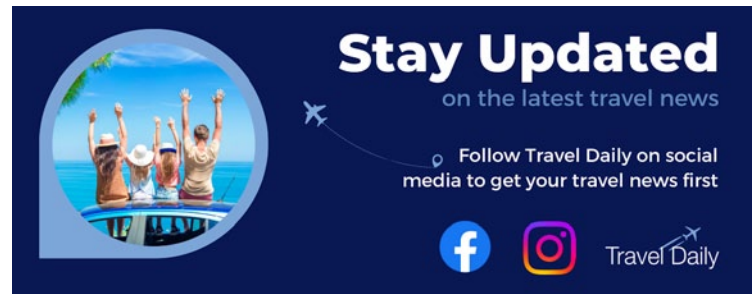
In response to an image of the smashed racquets (*pictured*), one shocked X user quipped, "What the hell, did Jetstar hang them off the side of the plane?"



YEAR IN REVIEW

TAKE A LOOK BACK AT THE BIGGEST STORIES FOR THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY IN 2024.

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Norwegian Cruise Line - Europe 2025-2026 Guide
Norwegian Cruise Line has released its new Europe 2025-2026 Cruising Guide available for travel advisors. Travellers can discover an extensive selection of immersive sailings in 2025 and 2026, spanning the Mediterranean, Greek Isles and Northern Europe. Travellers can also learn about more time spent in port, with many stays featuring late nights and overnights, as well as Norwegian's Mandara Spa, world-class dining, and specialty restaurants. The brochure is now available for download as an e-brochure, and hard copies are available to order from Coghlan.



Railway Adventures - Queensland Backcountry
Railway Adventures has launched its Queensland Backcountry tour, in collaboration with Outback Aussie Tours, detailed in the tour operator's latest brochure. The tour takes travellers from the garden city of Toowoomba to the rugged beauty of Carnarvon Gorge, through historic towns like Roma and Mitchell, to the starlit skies of Charleville and Quilpie. Travellers will also experience the historical town of Longreach, the gemfields of Emerald, and the coastal allure of Rockhampton, before returning to Brisbane, Queensland's capital. The tour departs between 27 Jul and 09 Aug, and is available from \$9,985 per person twin share.



Journese - Europe 2025
Journese has released a new interactive Europe sales brochure, highlighting its curated product portfolio with more than 530 four- and five-star hotels and resorts, and eight river and ocean cruises across 27 countries in Europe. Travel advisors can explore Journese' Innovative Choices across Europe featuring a variety of premier hotels and resorts offering daily breakfast; private resort residences; and more, which can be paired with all classes of air service, including first and business class; activities including private excursions; private transfers; and more. The brochure also includes Journese's newest cruise partner, Explora Journeys, while travellers can also embark on small-ship river and ocean voyages on AmaWaterways, Atlas Ocean Voyages, Celestyal Cruises, Emerald Cruises, Norwegian Cruise Line, Scenic Luxury Cruises & Tours, and Windstar Cruises. The Europe digital sales brochure is available for download [HERE](#).

Azamara's cool winter season



AZAMARA is breaking new waves by announcing its first cruises to Europe during winter as part of its 2026-2027 season.

The cruise line said it is meeting the growing demand for Europe by offering guests the opportunity to explore the continent during its winter months, introducing 66 new sailings.

One of the highlights of the European winter season will see the line sail up the Guadalquivir to Seville, which can only be accessed by small ships, where passengers will dock in the city centre for a two-night stay.

Winter cruises will allow easier admittance to museums, landmarks, and local markets, avoiding the summer crowds, and providing guests with more intimate access to landmarks and cultural experiences.

Azamara cruisers will also experience the culture and history of China as the cruise line sails into the heart of Shanghai.

Other highlights of the season will see eight new Grand Voyages, spanning more than 35 nights, and visiting a variety of continents and destinations. *MS*

Pictured: Azamara Onward.

Nagano spotlight

OUTDOOR enthusiasts will be targeted by Japan's Nagano region in 2025 as part of a push to build its reputation as an affordable destination for Aussies.

Nagano's bid to generate a more year-round tourist profile comes on the back of a 25% year-on-year jump in visitor nights by Australians for Jan-Aug 2024, compared to the prior year.

The strong result sees Australia sit comfortably as the second most valued inbound source market for Nagano.

Central to the campaign will be the historic Nakasendo trade route, a road which links Kyoto with Tokyo and is popular with hikers and mountain bikers.

"We aim to increase tourist interest in Nagano beyond the ski slopes, the hot springs and the bathing snow monkeys," said Nagano Tourism Organisation's Australian rep, Helen Wong.

More information about Nakasendo will be available to Aussie travel agents in Mar 2025 via a webinar which will cover the region's scenery and food culture, with a date for the presentation to be advised early in the year.